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GOVERNMENT OF PORTO RICO
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
SAN JUAN

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April 1, 1931

Circular Letter No. 123.

Subject: RESULTS OF TESTS IN SECOND UNITS.

To : Supervisors of Schools.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Following will be found the results of tests given by the Department in the Second Units of some school districts, and suggestions for improving the work.

Results of Tests in Spanish Language given in various Second Units:

Juncos	80%
Río Grande	78%
Toa Baja	78%
Corozal	70%
San Sebastián	70%
Loíza	69%
Lares (Bartolo)	68%
Quebradillas	67%
Toa Alta	65%
Lares (Lares)	58%

The idea of the language tests given was to find out the mastery of the Spanish vocabulary that the children of the Second Unit already possess. Juncos obtained the highest average (80%) and Lares (Barrio Lares) the lowest (58%).

The following are copies of pupils' original work from fourth grade pupils in "lenguaje" as collected in the last visits.

"El Salón"

"El salón tiene cuadros, palangas, banderas y una. Míster Colón tiene un huerto grande."

"El Hombre más Rico del Barrio"

"El respetuoso Señor Julio Martinez es el hombre mas rico de mi barrio. El Sr. Martinez tiene muchas plantaciones de cañas, cuando el Señor Martinez corte las cañas me dará algunas."

The examination papers were left with the teachers so that these may be able to determine by an analysis of the papers of the individual pupils the characteristic errors of the class. An analysis of the above two compositions show lack of unity of thought (El Salón y el Huerto), punctuation, capitalization and accentuation (El Sr. Martinez tiene muchas plantaciones de cañas, cuando el Señor Martinez corte las cañas me dará algunas., and the use of English words (Míster instead of señor). The repetition of the same subject in every sentence of a composition should be avoided. It gives an idea of limited vocabulary. In some of the compositions examined the ideas were awkwardly expressed.

Remedy for improvement: Teachers should be instructed:

1- To select practical themes in relation to the child's life for compositions. Such themes as "El Barrio en que Vivo", "El Agricultor más Rico del Barrio", "Mi Casa", "La Granja", "El Camino de mi Casa a la Escuela" are suitable and practical for country children.

2- They should insist

a- upon originality;
b- upon unity of thought, e. g. all sentences written leading to the same topic;
c- upon sentences made up of more than ten words;
d- upon correct punctuation, accentuation and capitalization.

Results of Tests in Lectura:

Naguabo	92%
Lares (Lares)	90%
San Sebastián	79%
Loíza	76%
Corozal	76%
Toa Baja	64%
Arroyo	53%

Silent reading tests to verify pupils' comprehension were given in the various grades. Stories not found in the pupils' readers were selected according to grades, and were used in these tests. The following story was used in most cases with fourth grade pupils:

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"El Perro Lanudo"

"Arturo, Carmen y Luis fueron una tarde a pasear por la playa. Con ellos fué un perro lanudo muy hermoso que su papá tenía. Se aproximaron mucho a la orilla del mar y una ola arrastró a Arturito dentro del agua. Muy asustados Carmen y Luis fueron corriendo a dar la noticia a sus padres. Cuando ellos llegaron a la playa encontraron a Arturito en salvo sobre la arena y al noble perro cuidándolo a su lado."

The story was read to the class twice and the following oral exercise was given:

1- ¿Cómo era el perro?
2- ¿Por qué se fué Arturo al agua?
3- ¿De quién era el perro?
4- ¿Cómo fueron los niños a dar la noticia?
5- ¿Por qué estaban Carmen y Luis muy asustados?

The test consisted of the following exercises:

I- Completion (filling blanks):

1- Arturo, _____ y Luis fueron a _____ por la _____.
2- El perro era _____ y hermoso.
3- Una _____ arrastró a _____ dentro del agua.
4- Carmen y Luis se _____ y fueron a dar la noticia a sus _____.
5- El _____ salvó a Arturito poniéndolo en la _____.

II- True and False:

___ 1- Arturo, Carmen y Luis salieron a pasear por la mañana.
___ 2- Una ola se llevó a Luis dentro del agua.
___ 3- Uno de ellos se fué dentro del agua porque se aproximó a la orilla.
___ 4- Arturito se ahogó en el agua.
___ 5- El perro también se ahogó por salvar a Arturito.
___ 6- Cuando ellos regresaron a la playa encontraron a Arturo vivo.
___ 7- El perro había puesto a Arturito en la arena.
___ 8- Los tres niños estaban paseando en la playa.
___ 9- Carmen y Luis se asustaron porque el perro se lanzó a salvar a Arturito.
___10- El perro era lanudo y hermoso.

III- Multiple choice:

1- Arturo, Carmen y Luis fueron a pasear al pueblo, al campo, a la playa, al bosque.
2- Arturito fué salvado por Carmen, su padre, el perro, un vecino.
3- Arturo, Carmen y Luis eran amigos, hermanos, enemigos, primos.
4- Arturito se fué al agua por una ola, porque Luis lo empujó, el perro lo mordió, se mareó.
5- Arturito no se ahogó porque lo salvó su padre, Luis, Carmen, el perro.

The averages were satisfactory with the exception of Arroyo and Toa Baja. We advise the teachers that after they have taught a story, they prepare exercises similar to the ones given here to test the class in silent reading. The vocabulary of the pupils must grow from the list of words coming into it through the reading exercises. The new words of the lessons and the ones of doubtful spelling should be copied by the pupils in notebooks specially prepared for such a purpose. Drills on these words in spelling and sentence formation exercises may be had from time to time.

Results of Tests in English:

Lares (Bartolo)	85%
Adjuntas	83%
Jayuya	82%
Bayamón	81%
Caguas	79%
Patillas	62%
Aguadilla	60%
San Sebastián	58%
Quebradillas	36%

The English tests given to the various grades consisted of three parts:

First: Silent reading tests to fourth grade pupils using the vocabulary of the third grades. This exercise consisted of questions in strips of paper for the pupils to answer.

The pupils were asked to read the questions silently and to answer them orally. The following were some of the questions used in this test:

1- What animals have long tails?
2- Of what is the fence of the school made?
3- What do you put in your coffee to make it sweet?
4- What vegetables do you have in your garden?

5- Can you throw the ball with the left hand?
6- What animals eat grass?
7- Name the fowls that hatch their eggs.
8- Did you drink coffee this morning?
9- Have you seen a river?
10- Did you take off your shoes last night?

Second: Spelling exercises using words of common use selected from the English Language Book for the fourth grade. This exercise was given to pupils of grades fifth and sixth. The words were used in a sentence for illustration before dictating. The following were the words used in the test:

died	daughters	industrious
fenced	satisfied	useful
chicken	immediately	lazy
neighbors	smallest	thief
attending	hungry	owned
permission	building	reached
happy	school	heaven
search	everywhere	market
	broken	

Third: Stories for silent reading and exercises similar to the one given for Spanish Reading.

The following silent reading test was given in the sixth grade. Easier stories were given in the fourth and fifth grades. The new vocabulary of the story was taught before giving the exercises.

The Hidden Treasure

"Once a poor man had a small farm. He was so old that he was no longer strong enough to work it. He had three sons. They were lazy and did not like to work. The neighbors called them "Idlers".

"One day the farmer felt sick. He was so weak that he could not even hold a glass in his trembling hands. He called his sons to his bedside. "My sons", he said, "in a certain place in my farm there is a hidden treasure. I do not know the exact place where it lies. Try to find it. It is the only fortune that I can leave you."

"A few hours later the farmer died. The three sons, desiring to get rich began to dig the ground eagerly. They dug for many days until all the soil in the farm was spaded. They did not find the treasure.

"Seeing that all the soil was already spaded they decided to plant grain. The crop was very abundant. They sold the grain for a large amount of money and had a good profit. The farmer was right. The three sons had found the treasure."

Exercise No. 1 -

1- Why did the neighbors call the three sons "Idlers"?
2- Why did they dig the ground?
3- What did their father teach them?
4- How did they get rich?

Exercise No. 2 -

1- The poor man had a _____ farm.
2- His three sons were _____ and were called _____.
3- The poor man was so _____ he could not hold a _____ in his _____ hands.
4- He had a hidden _____ in his _____.
5- The sons began to dig the _____ to find the _____ treasure.

Exercise No. 3 -

_____ 1- The poor farmer was an old man.
_____ 2- His three sons were lazy and were called "Idlers".
_____ 3- Because the sons were lazy the crop was abundant.
_____ 4- The oldest son was not an "Idler".
_____ 5- The three sons spent the whole year digging for the treasure.
_____ 6- The sons wanted to get rich without working.
_____ 7- By selling the grain they made a good profit.
_____ 8- Their father told them the place where the treasure lay.
_____ 9- When he was about to die, the old man distributed his money among his sons.
_____10- The oldest son got the largest amount of money.

Exercise No. 4 -

1- The old man told his sons that the treasure was: under a stone, near a tree, somewhere in his farm, at home.
2- The three sons were called "Idlers" because: they were lazy, they were never at home, they were rich, their father was old and could not help them.
3- Soon after their father died: they sold the farm, began to dig for the treasure, left the farm and went away, bought a new farm.
4- The fortune the old man gave his sons was: his house, a large amount of money, the small farm, a large crop.

In the silent reading test using the vocabulary of the third grade it was found that many pupils did not understand

words which were supposed to have been taught in the second and third grades. They also show weakness in the correct use of the past tense and third person singular of the verbs. The verb forms should be reviewed in the fourth grades in combination with the oral English vocabulary of the primary grades.

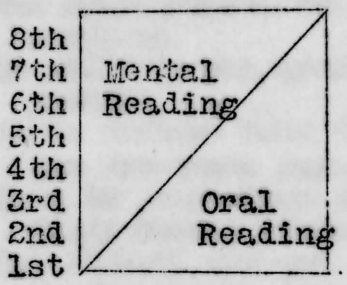
Reading for thought-getting has not received due attention in some grades. The following weak points were noticed:

1- Pupils are liable to learn by memory whole stories instead of grasping their meaning to be told in their own words.

2- They tell the stories "singing" just the same as the poorest reader does orally.

After a reading exercise it will be well to test differe[illegible] pupils to see if they understand what was taught. Emphasis on reading for thought-getting should not be interpreted as meaning that oral reading in the Second Units is to be abandoned.

The following graph shows the importance to be given to each one of these kinds of reading:



Results of Tests in Arithmetic:

Loíza	78%
Bayamón	71%
Juncos	68%
Lares (Bartolo)	60%
Naguabo	54%
Arroyo	54%
Toa Alta	52%
Caguas	50%
Corozal	45%
San Sebastián	41%
Aguadilla	36%

As a general rule the teachers of the various grades tested have tried to reach a standard accuracy and speed in the fundamental operations and have neglected the applicatio[illegible] of numbers to problems representing real situations in life. The children need training in developing the power to apply

arithmetical knowledge to real situations of life. Oral problems relating to school life, games and amusements, buying and selling may be found helpful. Problems without numbers are of great value, for they require thought as to how to proceed to solve a concrete problem, without having the mind concentrated on the actual operation itself. The following are types of such problems:

1- Juan salió de su casa con cierta cantidad de dinero en su bolsillo y gastó parte de su dinero en ciertas compras, ¿cómo podrías averiguar la cantidad que tenía al principio?

2- Si por varios lápices pagué cierta cantidad de centavos, ¿qué tendrías que hacer para averiguar cuánto costaría otra cantidad de lápices de la misma clase?

3- Varios niños cosechan vegetales en sus huertos y los venden en el mercado. ¿Qué tendrías que hacer para que cada niño reciba una cantidad igual del producto de la venta?

Habits of reasoning in Arithmetic are as important as habits of correct calculation, and the teachers should not overlook the necessity that the pupils of the Second Units reason out the steps in the solution of problems.

We would recommend that committees of teachers be appoin to select a series of problems by grades arranged in order of difficulty. Problems such as the following may be selected:

1- María fué a la tienda a comprar y gastó $3.45 más que José. ¿Cuánto gastó ella si José gastó $7.81?

2- Un niño se ganó $2.85 vendiendo productos de la granja y quería comprar un traje que valía $7.50. ¿Cuánto más necesitaba?

3- A 4 por 25¢, ¿cuánto costarán 168 plátanos?

4- Un agricultor compró 7 quintales de tabaco a $32 el quintal. Con el dinero compró una finca de cinco cuerdas. ¿Cuánto pagó por cuerda?

5- Maximino tiene 16¢, Ramón tiene 25¢ más que Maximino. ¿Cuánto tienen los dos juntos?

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The above mentioned remarks and suggestions may apply to other Second Units and may prove of help to you in improving the academic work of the schools.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) JOSE PADIN
Commissioner of Education

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